



Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Introductory Statement

The policy is an approved approach to the teaching of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Ardfinnan NS. It was developed to inform teachers and parents as to what material is covered in the RSE programme within SPHE.

Our School Philosophy

As a staff, we are committed to the creation of a warm and friendly atmosphere in the school where there is a sense of good order and an atmosphere conducive to learning. The school promotes a Christian Ethos where respect, tolerance and fairness are promoted. Our aim is to create a secure environment to ensure everyone's well being and safety and to maintain a happy, harmonious, working school so that our pupils may develop socially, personally, spiritually, emotionally, creatively and academically to their fullest potential.

Definition of Relationships and Sexuality Education

Relationships and Sexuality Education is an integral part of SPHE and is taught in this context. It provides structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviours within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

RSE aims to help children learn, at home and in school, about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image and self esteem and providing them with appropriate information.

Relationships and Sexuality Education within Social Personal and Health Education

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is a subject on the school curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others. SPHE aims to develop the child's emotional, moral, social and spiritual growth as well as their intellectual, physical, political, religious and creative development.

The SPHE programme covers a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol and drug awareness, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE.

Current Provision Included in the School Curriculum is:

- SPHE lessons (provided through discrete curricular time and integration)
- Use of the RSE Manuals and Busy Bodies resources
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Webwise resources
- Weaving Well Being Programme
- The teaching of the 'Friends for Life Programme'-Fourth/Fifth Class or where applicable.
- Adapted resources for SEN from www.pdst.ie
- Religious Education.
- The teachers will cover all aspects of RSE with their classes every second year.
- The Mandatory Stay Safe programme is taught in the year that RSE is not being taught.

The aims of our Relationships and Sexuality Education programme are:

- To enhance the personal development, self-esteem and wellbeing of the child
- To help the child to develop healthy friendships and relationships
- To foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, spiritual and social framework
- To enable the child to acquire an understanding of, and respect for human love, sexual intercourse and reproduction
- To develop and promote in the child a sense of wonder and awe at the process of birth and new life
- To enable the child to be comfortable with the sexuality of oneself and others while growing and developing.

RSE Policy

Policies which support SPHE/RSE

- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy

Guidelines for the management and organisation of Relationships and Sexuality Education in our school

Curriculum Matters

- The curriculum by NCCA will be followed as published, and will be taught from infants to 6th class.
- All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy.
- The SPHE/RSE curriculum will be of a spiral nature and all content objectives will be covered by the time children leave 6th class.
- All resources used will be in keeping with the ethos of the school, the whole school plan for SPHE and the RSE policy.
- Each class teacher will teach the content for their class level as laid out in the curriculum, and utilising the RSE manuals to complement their teaching.
- Where an outside speaker is used, the class teacher will remain in the classroom, as per circular 0022/2010. The speaker will be made aware of the school's RSE policy.
- For an outline of the RSE programme - see Appendix 1.
- For the vocabulary to be taught in the sensitive areas - see Appendix 2.

Management of RSE

- The strands Growing and Changing and Taking Care of my Body are covered in Year 2 of a 2 year SPHE plan. These sensitive lessons will be taught in the third term.
- The sensitive lessons are covered as part of these broad topics.
- Special arrangements exist for the delivery of the sensitive elements from 4th class up.
- Special consideration will be taken to ensure that the needs of children with SEN are met. Taking into account the pupil's social and emotional development, instruction will be based on individual needs where possible. Parents will be consulted around sensitive issues.

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Informing and Involving Parents:

- Parents will be informed via Aladdin/email in advance of lessons on the sensitive areas of RSE programme. They will be invited to view the home/school links documents attached and asked to discuss these topics with their child prior to the lessons in school.
- Parents have a responsibility to become involved, to inform themselves of the programme content and to prepare children for the information they will acquire around the sensitive areas and discuss areas covered in RSE/SPHE.
- Parents are invited/welcome to view the curriculum/RSE resources and may speak to the class teacher if they have any concerns.
- The school acknowledges that parents have the primary responsibility for education their children in sexual matters. The school RSE programme acts as a support to parents, and parents retain the right to withdraw their children from classes.

Withdrawal from RSE

- RSE is an obligatory requirement of the Department of Education and Science, it should be inclusive. However, a parent's right to withdraw a pupil from the process will be respected on the understanding that the parent is taking full responsibility for this aspect of education.
- Following discussion with Principal and Class Teacher, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the sensitive lessons it should be given in writing stating their reasons for doing so and this will be centrally filed.
- If a child has been withdrawn from the sensitive RSE lessons, the school takes no responsibility for what the child may hear following on from the teaching of the lessons. eg. What they may hear on yard.

Teacher Opt Out:

- It is envisaged that all aspects of SPHE and RSE will be taught by class teachers to their own classes.
- A teacher's right to opt out from teaching the sensitive areas will be respected. Arrangements for the teaching of the programme in that teacher's class will be made by the Principal.

Dealing with Questions:

- All questions answered will reflect the parameters of the curriculum.
- Questions to the teacher may be oral or written within the group setting and answered within boundaries of the curriculum and school policy.

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- If any question is deemed to be inappropriate, the teacher will refer the child to their parents or state that this information may be available at a later stage of the curriculum, or in post primary school.
- Teachers may exercise discretion to contact parents themselves if they feel that a question is inappropriate.

Confidentiality and Child Protection:

- Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, the school will follow the Department of Education and Science child protection guidelines and guidelines as set out in "Children First".

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

- Consultation with parents in advance and anticipation of the children's needs will be central to ensuring learning is meaningful.
- At the request of the parents of pupils with SEN, the school will facilitate the teaching of the lessons on sensitive issues on another occasion individually or in a small group setting.
- Children may be pre-taught language or concepts in anticipation of whole class work.
- Any different or specific objectives related to the pupils own learning needs should be detailed in their support plan in consultation with parents.

Provision for ongoing support

- Opportunities provided by our Education Centre will be brought to the attention of staff members.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in RSE
- Staff meetings utilised as a platform for discussion and development of RSE materials.
- Support from a PDST Advisor
- Promotion and communication of resources available from www.pdst.ie.

Resources:

- Relationships and Sexuality Education Resource Materials (DES) - Each class teacher has a copy of the appropriate manual or access to it in online / pdf format.
- Other resources that support the broader aims of RSE include:
- Stay Safe programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anatomical Dolls and Story books

RSE Policy

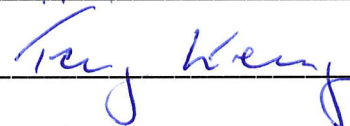
- Busy Bodies DVD and Booklet. This DVD and booklet were developed to support the teaching of the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class component of RSE within the context of SPHE.
- INTO Different Families, Same Love Poster
- RESPECT guidelines.
- Making the Links.

Review

- The policy will be reviewed and evaluated at certain pre-determined times and as necessary.
- The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise.
- Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

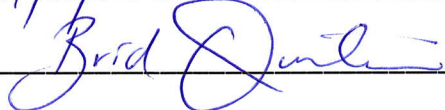
This plan was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on:

Date: 24/8/21

Signed: 

(Chairperson)

Date: 24/8/21

Signed: 

(Principal)

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RSE Policy

Appendix 1

RSE forms part of the national curriculum for SPHE by NCCA and will be taught from infants to 6th class. RSE will be covered under the following strands and strand units of the SPHE curriculum:

Myself
Growing and changing
Taking care of my body

The RSE programme is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The general programme which contains content covered through SPHE strands and strand units and complement the aims and objectives of RSE
 - Friendship
 - Self-identity
 - Family
 - Self-esteem
 - Growing up
- 2) The second section will deal with any sensitive / specific content covered through RSE strands and strand units. The sensitive aspects are in bold

<u>Topics covered up to 2nd include:</u>	<u>Topics covered from 3rd to 6th include:</u>
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RSE Policy

<p>Keeping Safe</p> <p>Bodily changes from birth (birth-9)</p> <p>Making age appropriate choices</p> <p>Appreciating family life</p> <p>Recognising and expressing feelings</p> <p>Self-care, hygiene, diet, exercise and sleep</p> <p>Expressing opinions and listening to others</p> <p>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms (Junior/ Senior Infants)</p> <p>Naming the parts of the male/ female body using appropriate anatomical terms and identify some of their functions (1st/2nd)</p>	<p>Bodily changes</p> <p>Healthy eating, personal hygiene, exercise</p> <p>Keeping Safe</p> <p>Expressing Feelings</p> <p>Appreciating family life</p> <p>Making healthy and responsible decisions</p> <p>Forming Friendships</p> <p>Discuss the stages and sequence of development of the human baby in the womb (4th class)</p> <p>Introduction to puberty and changes (4th, 5th and 6th class)</p> <p>Changes that occur in boys and girls with the onset of puberty (5th and 6th Class)</p> <p>Reproductive system of male/female adults (5th and 6th class)</p> <p>Understanding sexual intercourse, conception and birth within the context of a committed loving relationship (5th, 6th class)</p>
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Appendix 2

Vocabulary taught

Junior & Senior Infants	1 st & 2 nd class	3 rd & 4 th class	5 th & 6 th class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> womb breastfeeding penis vulva 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> penis vulva vagina womb breastfeeding urethra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise previous vocabulary umbilical cord changes in puberty menstruation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revise previous vocabulary wet dreams Busy Bodies language semen sexual intercourse